

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 3, lines 5-11, the paragraph was amended as follows:

-- In one embodiment, R_2 is an ester ($R_{2a}C(O)O-$), a carbamate ($R_{2a}R_{2b}NC(O)O-$), a carbonate ($R_{2a}OC(O)O-$), or a **thiocarbonate** [**thiocarbamate**] ($R_{2a}SC(O)O-$) wherein R_{2a} and R_{2b} are independently hydrogen, hydrocarbyl, substituted hydrocarbyl or heterocyclo. In a preferred embodiment, R_2 is an ester ($R_{2a}C(O)O-$), wherein R_{2a} is aryl or heteroaromatic. In another preferred embodiment, R_2 is an ester ($R_{2a}C(O)O-$), wherein R_{2a} is substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, furyl, thienyl, or pyridyl. In one particularly preferred embodiment, R_2 is benzyloxy. --.

On page 3, line 30 through page 4, line 15, the paragraph was amended as follows:

-- While R_9 is keto in one embodiment of the present invention, in other embodiments R_9 may have the alpha or beta stereochemical configuration, preferably the beta stereochemical configuration, and may be, for example, α - or β -hydroxy or α - or β -acyloxy. For example, when R_9 is acyloxy, it may be an ester ($R_{9a}C(O)O-$), a carbamate ($R_{9a}R_{9b}NC(O)O-$), a carbonate ($R_{9a}OC(O)O-$), or a **thiocarbonate** [**thiocarbamate**] ($R_{9a}SC(O)O-$) wherein R_{9a} and R_{9b} are independently hydrogen, hydrocarbyl, substituted hydrocarbyl or heterocyclo. If R_9 is an ester ($R_{9a}C(O)O-$), R_{9a} is substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted alkenyl, substituted or unsubstituted aryl or substituted or unsubstituted heteroaromatic. Still more preferably, R_9 is an ester ($R_{9a}C(O)O-$), wherein R_{9a} is substituted or unsubstituted phenyl, substituted or unsubstituted furyl, substituted or unsubstituted thienyl, or substituted or unsubstituted pyridyl. In one embodiment R_9 is ($R_{9a}C(O)O-$) wherein R_{9a} is methyl, ethyl, propyl (straight, branched or cyclic), butyl (straight, branched or cyclic), pentyl, (straight, branched or cyclic), or hexyl (straight, branched or cyclic). In another embodiment R_9 is ($R_{9a}C(O)O-$) wherein R_{9a} is substituted methyl, substituted ethyl, substituted propyl (straight, branched or cyclic), substituted butyl (straight, branched or cyclic), substituted pentyl, (straight, branched or cyclic), or substituted hexyl (straight, branched or cyclic) wherein the substituent(s) is/are selected from the group consisting of heterocyclo, alkoxy, alkenoxy, alkynoxy, aryloxy, hydroxy, protected hydroxy, keto,

acyloxy, nitro, amino, amido, thiol, ketal, acetal, ester and ether moieties, but not phosphorous containing moieties. --.